

Speech on the House Floor Concerning the Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (TEA-LU)

March 9, 2005

Congressman Luis G. Fortuño

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the gentleman from Alaska (Chairman *Don Young*) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Ranking Member *Oberstar*), as well as the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. *Petri*), the chairman of the subcommittee, and the gentleman from Oregon (Ranking Member Mr. *DeFazio*) for their leadership in moving this legislation so quickly through this Congress.

As the name implies, TEA-LU is a bequest of the highest degree to our Nation. TEA-LU will have a positive impact on the Nation's economy through the creation of millions of new jobs in the transportation sector and other related industries. It will bring the highway and transit systems to a higher level as we continue to travel into the 21st century.

In my district, TEA-LU means an injection of infrastructure monies needed to integrate our transportation systems and alleviate problems of traffic congestion and road safety, while spurring economic development on the island. TEA-LU will take Puerto Rico to a new level of transportation based on an integrated transportation system. Tren Urbano, the bus system, trolleys, and our ferries will all integrate to promote public transportation, reducing the problem of traffic congestion.

For Puerto Rico, TEA-LU means the completion of an important highway project that will become one of the only two highways crossing Puerto Rico from north to south. It means the completion of a highway system that will cover the perimeter of the island. It also means promoting economic development across the board. It means giving access to towns and rural communities that, without the funding made available in TEA-LU, would remain isolated. It means losing less lives to traffic accidents. It means moving Puerto Rico forward at a faster pace.

On behalf of the 4 million U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico whom I have the great honor to represent, I thank again the gentleman from Alaska (Chairman *Don Young*) and my colleagues on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for this great legacy.